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THE LORD'S PRAYER

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S. Exposition of each phrase of the Lord's Prayer.
127 pp.

By

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

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TO
MY BELOVED COMRADES
THE
MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
OF THE
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
IN
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

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OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

THE Old Testament generally conceives of God as Father of the Jewish nation. Some of its writers, however, proclaim a divine concern for all mankind. In the nineteenth chapter of Isaiah, the idea of a tribal God is nobly transcended in the announcement of a day to come when Yahweh will bestow his blessings upon the traditional enemies of Israel, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." According to Isaiah 56:7, the house of the Lord is destined to become a house of prayer for all peoples. Especially noteworthy is the passage (Isaiah 25:6-8) which foretells a day when the God of Israel will make bountiful provision for the needs of every nation and dry the tears of all mankind. There is also the Book of Ruth, which slyly rebukes a bigoted racialism by making out that one of the forebears of King David was a Moabitess! (It was as if someone should now discover that a

great-grandmother of Adolph Hitler was a Jewess.) And there is the Book of Jonah, which grandly proclaims a divine compassion on all human beings without distinction of nation or race.

The dominant thought of the Old Testament is of a God who deals with the nation, and only incidently with individuals as members of a people. But in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as also in some of the later psalmists, religion becomes personal in the sense of a direct and intimate relation between the individual and God. And in the period between the Old and New Testaments God was commonly spoken of as the Father of individuals. The address, "Our Father, who art in heaven," was used in many Jewish prayers that voiced the needs and hopes of individual men and women.

I

Jesus was not the first to call God "Father." But in his teaching and life "the fatherhood of God" becomes a new revelation. On the lips of Jesus no other name of God appears as often as Father. For him it denotes not only love but majesty, power, and the right to command; but love is central in his thought. The majesty of God is the majesty of holy love. The commands

of God are the commands of love. The power of God is used to promote the ends of love.

Even in nature—where it is not always apparent—Jesus finds evidence of the love of God. The birds of the heaven—"Your heavenly Father feedeth them." The lilies of the field—"I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." And if God cares for them, he certainly cares for human beings. Men are of more value than many sparrows. They are of greater worth than the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is gone. God knows all about them—everything there is to know. No sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge. As for human beings, the very hairs of their head are numbered. God cares for all men, not only for the good and pious. He makes his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, sends rain on the just and the unjust also—marvelous evidence (according to Jesus) of the love of God for sinners, and not only of "the impartiality of nature." There are some among us for whom a sinner, unless he is our kind of sinner, is an object of hatred or of contempt. Not so for God! He is kind, even toward the unthankful and evil. He cares, even for his disobedient children. No shep-

herd who has lost a sheep, no poor woman who has lost a coin, is more eager to recover it than God is to reclaim a human soul that is lost. He does not wait for "the unthankful and evil" to become thankful and good; he "goes after that which is lost."

In Jesus, this teaching came alive. He had no illusions about human nature. He "knew what was in man" [1]—knew better, perhaps, than present-day "realists," and those who are quite sure that sinful man cannot be made over, even by the grace of God. Nevertheless, he refused to despair of men. He believed that a prodigal son could "come to himself" and "arise and go to his father." [2] He not only believed this; he acted as if he believed it. He spent long evenings with "publicans and sinners." And we may be quite sure that he was not merely out for a good time! "The rabbis," a distinguished Jewish scholar has said, "welcomed the sinner in his repentance. But to *seek out* the sinner and, instead of avoiding the

[1] John 2:25.

[2] It may be argued, perhaps, that the prodigal remains a prodigal at heart, despite the robe, the ring, the shoes, and the father's love. But it would surely seem to be the thought of Jesus that he becomes a new creation. "It was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

bad companion, to choose him as your friend in order to work out his moral redemption, this was, I fancy, something new in the religious history of Israel."[3] It was, in fact, something new under the sun. Nor was this the only new and unheard of thing that Jesus did: he took little children into his arms and blessed them; he looked purely on women and treated them with respect! He was the first on earth to treat children as if they were children of God, and not merely the offspring of human parents; and the first to treat women, not as chattels or playthings, but as children of God. It is not to be wondered at, though it is very wonderful, that people who knew Jesus got a new idea of God.

Simply to say that God is our Father is not enough. Among us there are all sorts of fathers, of whom some could hardly serve as an illustration, much less as a symbol, of the love of God. Studdert-Kennedy once said: "When I try to tell a small boy in the slums that God is his Father, I often wonder what he makes of it when his idea about fathers may be that they beat mothers and are generally drunk."[4] Nor is it only in the slums

[3] C. J. Montifiore, *The Teaching of Jesus,* p. 57.

[4] *The Wicket Gate,* p. 78.

that the word "father" may have connotations which hardly make it a fit symbol of the love of God! It is necessary to speak, as the New Testament does, of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II

To call God "Father" is to apply a human term to the ultimate Reality of the world. It is to ascribe a quality which appears among men to One who may be supposed to say: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."[5] And there are some among us who shrink from anything that smacks of anthropomorphism. But it is, of course, a fact that all our ideas of God are anthropomorphic, in the sense that they derive from our own experience of the world and life. We cannot think of God except in terms of what we know or are able to conceive of. We have knowledge of machines; we make and use them. We can therefore think of God in mechanical terms. We know something about organisms, their structure, development, and function. We can therefore think of God in biological

[5] Isaiah 55:9.

terms. We have some knowledge and experience of personality; hence we can think of God in personal terms. In any case, our thought of God is anthropomorphic, in the sense that it makes use of terms which human experience provides.

We are bound to suppose that whatever we may say—or think—about God is inadequate. Within the reach of finite knowledge and experience there is nothing that can serve as an adequate symbol of God. Even in personality, as we know it, there are limitations which no one in his right senses would think of attributing to God. But granting that "father" is an inadequate symbol of God, one may surely suppose that it is more adequate than "organism" or "machine"; or than any such expression as "life-urge" or "integrating process" or "principle of concretion." No doubt God is more than "father" can possibly be made to connote. But is he less? And if we speak of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may at least be sure that we are thinking of God in terms of the greatest and best that we know.

III

Men have been slow to believe that God is the kind of God whom Jesus pictured and revealed.

Their slowness to believe such "good news" has been due in part to the difficulty of reconciling this idea of God with all the facts of human experience. But not to that alone. There are other reasons for human slowness to believe that God is love.

Jesus measured greatness by service.[6] Not all of us do. Some of us measure it by power to command service. In fact, thanks to the egoism of the human animal, there is a tendency in all of us to think of greatness as power, not to render service, but to command it. They who thus measure greatness among men naturally find it difficult to employ a diametrically different standard when they think of God. As they see it, the majesty of God is the majesty of kings, the glory of God is the glory of empire. God is a Great Power in heaven comparable to the Great Powers of earth. He sees nothing wrong in Western imperialism—at least nothing very wrong; he doubtless feels about the tinted races very much as we do. It is fitting that the rulers of the nations should, at least on formal occasions, bow down before him, though they need not feel too humble when they do so. It is fitting that the spiritual leaders of the church should, in keeping with the importance of

[6] Matthew 20:26.

their holy office, dwell in palaces, and that all leading laymen should be men of means.

They who measure greatness by a standard that is opposite to that of Jesus do not find it easy to believe that God is love. Indeed, they may find it impossible to think of the Most High in terms of One who, "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands," washed his disciples' feet.[7]

Jesus refused to take the sword, although he was once sorely tempted to do so.[8] "Despising shame," he accepted the cross, and went to his death in the confidence of an ultimate triumph. But not all of us share his faith that Love is the supreme power in the universe. In a modern play entitled *Wings Over Europe* the minister of the navy undertakes to say what a demand for naval reduction means to him. As he sees them, battleships represent the security and the power and the glory of empire. "And now," he exclaims, "I am bidden to scrap them in the name of a Christ in whom I do not believe and in disregard of Jehovah,

[7] John 13:3.

[8] "Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—Matthew 4:8-10.

God of battles, in whom I do believe!" This frank confession—in a play one can afford to say anything that is not downright obscene—probably reveals the real faith of most of us. We are unwilling to rely on the instruments of love—justice, forgiveness, and co-operative effort for the good of all. We do not believe that the supreme power in the universe is Love, though we cling to the hope that God will be merciful to us at the last.

And there is also another reason for human unbelief in a God who is love. We cherish ambitions that cannot be promoted by the instruments of love. We want to retain possessions and privileges which, being had at the cost of poverty and suffering to others, we cannot appeal to love to preserve. The dreams of pride and avarice can be realized only through the employment of cunning. The fruits of injustice can be preserved only by force.

IV

There are some Christians today who believe that liberal Christianity has made too much of the love of God and too little of the wrath of God as proclaimed in the Bible. The Old Testament contains many a passage which proclaims a God who

is ruthless toward any individual or nation that stands in the way of his purpose. In Exodus it is made out that Jehovah says to Pharaoh, "Let my people go," and that when Pharaoh remains obdurate Jehovah produces a plague which kills all the first-born in the land of Egypt.[9] In the First Book of Samuel it is made out that Jehovah, angered by the conduct of an Arabian tribe which offered resistance to the Jews as they fled from Egypt into Palestine, ordered Samuel to slay these miserable offenders—men, women, and children—and to destroy all their possessions.[10] In the Book of Joel, to cite but one other instance, it is made out that Jehovah has thrown down a challenge to the nations that do not recognize his sovereignty.[11] Let them prepare for war. Let them beat their plowshares into swords, their pruning-hooks into spears, and come to the valley of Jehoshaphat, where Jehovah will execute judgment upon them. And it is said that when Jehovah shall have executed judgment upon them, they will be as grain when it is put to the sickle, they will be as grapes when men tread on them. Even the New Testament, although it emphasizes the grace

[9] Exodus 11:5.
[10] I Samuel 15:3.
[11] Joel 3:9.

of God, contains passages which assert that there is a sterner side to the divine nature. It may seem, then, to be true that liberal Christianity has made too much of the love of God and too little of the wrath of God as proclaimed in the Bible and revealed in history.

It requires, however, to be said that liberal Christianity has not been as complacent or as unrealistic as its present-day critics are attempting to make out. During the fateful years 1919-39 there were liberal Christians, not a few, who said that the vindictive Treaty of Versailles should be revised; that the League of Nations should be used to remedy conditions that were making for war, and not to maintain a *status quo* of inequality and injustice; that the Oriental Exclusion Act should be repealed and all Orientals placed on the quota basis that governs immigration from European countries; that the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act was an immoral measure which was destined to make trouble; that all nations should be given equal access to essential markets and raw materials; that there should be, within each nation, a more equitable distribution of the earnings of industry; and, in general, that we humans, inasmuch as we were not seeking first the kingdom of God and his right-

eousness, but money, prestige, and power, were undoubtedly headed toward disaster. Of liberal Christianity, as of the 1920's, it may be said that it relied too much on man and too little on God; but it may not fairly be said that it was altogether lacking in realism.

There is a moral order of the world which we humans do not create but only discover, usually by going against it and getting hurt. This moral order of the world is not an impersonal order; it is willed and maintained by God. It is, indeed, an eternal expression of the justice and love of God; and it is such that no good or permanent structure can be built on the basis of pride and selfishness. On that basis a home breaks up. On that basis an economic system breaks down. On that basis human society is as a house built on sand. The ultimate reality of the world is such that a happy and enduring home, a well-ordered and progressive society, a humane and lasting civilization can be built only on the basis of justice and intelligent cooperation for the good of all. "God is love." We may say of hard-boiled self-seeking that it is realistic. We may say of an economy based on competitive struggle for private gain that it is realistic. We may say of imperialism—the deliberate ex-

ploitation of backward peoples—that it is realistic. But our calling it realistic does not make it so; and, in fact, it is not so. On the contrary, it is absurdly and ruinously unrealistic, for it goes against the gain of the universe.

The nature of reality is such that human selfishness inevitably brings forth disaster. But when disaster comes, is every act of destruction, every infliction of loss and pain, to be thought of as a punishment which God *directly* wills? Liberal Christianity says No. It refuses to believe that the God whom we see in Christ is responsible for mass destruction and slaughter. These events occur in history. They are, it may be supposed, the inevitable consequence of human pride and greed. Given the political, economic, and social conditions of recent years, such frightful events as the world is now witnessing are, it may be supposed, bound to occur. But we are by no means driven to suppose that God directly wills them, any more than we are bound to suppose that he directly wills an earthquake that blots out thousands of human lives.

There are human parents who, when their children go wrong, have no desire to see them punished but would deliver them, if they could, from

the consequences of sin and folly. If we may argue, as Jesus repeatedly did, from the human to the divine, we may surely believe that God has no desire to punish people, that he, if it were possible to do so, would spare the world such destruction and suffering as it is now experiencing. We may even believe that, just as human parents are hurt by anything that hurts their children, God is "afflicted in all our afflictions," and not least in those which, by our pride and greed, we bring upon ourselves.

Belief that God directly punishes people makes, of course, a difference for faith. It is one thing to believe that God creates and maintains a moral order in which human selfishness leads at last to the bombing of cities and the starvation of civilian populations by a food blockade. It is quite another thing to believe that God, as a punishment for human sin, directly wills the unspeakable barbarity of total war. It makes a difference for faith. It also makes a difference for conduct. In our moral conduct, no doubt, we men are called upon to be imitators of God. If, then, we are led to believe that God punishes people, we may ourselves undertake to punish them; and in the belief, so congenial to our pride, that we are called upon

to act as the instruments of a divine justice, we may do cruel and abominable things.

At a time when human wisdom is confessedly bankrupt and human folly has brought forth disaster, we surely would do well to take note of a wisdom greater than ours—the wisdom of God revealed in Christ. The New Testament urges us to be imitators of God. Saint Paul writes: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you. Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us." [12] Jesus said: "Love your enemies, and do them good, ... and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." [13] But the New Testament, which urges us to be imitators of God, never urges us to punish people. Is it, then, true that "there is no punitive activity of God which we can imitate"? Is it true that men are punished *by* their sins, and not *for* them. Is it true that God, in his direct dealings with human beings, is always and only kind? Perhaps, after all, we should not

[12] Ephesians 4:32–5:2.

[13] Luke 6:35-36.

undertake to be the instruments of a divine justice, but should aspire to be the instruments of a divine mercy which is seeking to redeem the lives of men and to heal the hurt of the world. It is surely the teaching of Jesus that men are most like God when they are merciful and ready to forgive.[14]

[14] Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

AMONG us a name is merely a sign which serves to distinguish us one from another. Hence, we may say:

> What's in a name? That which we call a rose
> By any other word would smell as sweet.

But for the ancient Hebrew there was much in a name. A man's name, in many cases, served not only to distinguish him from his neighbors but to give information concerning his character or career. Jacob (The Supplanter) is renamed Israel (Striver-with-God) to indicate that he has striven with God and men, and won.[1] Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, is told: "She shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus [Jehovah-is-Salvation]; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."[2] And in ancient Hebrew usage the name of God signified the revealed character of God. One might say, "Let us appeal to the

[1] Genesis 32:28.
[2] Matthew 1:21.

justice and mercy of God"; or, with the same thought in mind, one might say, "Let us call upon the name of the Lord." Thus, to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name," is to pray that God may be known throughout all the world as One who is our Father, whose nature is holy love, and that, so known, he may everywhere be revered.

I

The importance of this petition when thus understood is apparent. What men conceive God to be makes a difference. In fact, it makes all the difference in the world. It has been said, "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry." It has been said, "God is always on the side of the heavier battalions." It has been said, "In this world of ours force is the ultimate power." These sayings are significant. They reveal what many people believe about the ultimate reality and power of the world. They give a plain answer to the question, In what do you put your trust? And people who, when all is said, put their trust in military force may hardly be expected to believe in the possibility of peace on earth or to participate in any serious attempt to organize the world for peace.

If it has not been said in so many words, it has often been supposed that God is on the side of privilege. This is the assumption of the Tory. The Tory is usually a "good churchman." He believes in God, looking with abhorrence upon a "godless Communism." In not a few cases he is truly and deeply religious. But the God in whom he wholeheartedly believes is himself a magnified Tory who looks with disfavor upon any sign of social unrest and who, if it comes to the worst, can always be depended upon to confound the advocates of social reform and uphold the defenders of the *status quo*. Hence the religion of the Tory does not prompt him to question the justice of social arrangements by which he benefits at the cost to others of continuing poverty and suffering. On the contrary, it merely serves to confirm him in the belief that the possessors of privilege are the servants of God and that the superior opportunities and advantages which they enjoy are, after all, but a fitting reward for their services.

It has persistently been supposed that God is on the side of what commonly passes as respectability. This is the assumption of the Pharisee. The Pharisee at his best is not a hypocrite. He is sincere; and he has, moreover, the courage of his

convictions. He does what he thinks is right, regardless of consequences. He is heroic in his devotion to the God in whom he believes. But the God in whom he believes does not ask his servants to be just and merciful and kind; he only asks them to fast twice in the week and pay tithes of everything they get, or to memorize the Shorter Catechism and listen to sermons two hours in length, or to go regularly to church and Sunday school and refrain from dancing, card playing, and theater going, or to uphold the standards of private morality and accept without question the existing arrangements of society.

Men's attitudes and conduct derive from their creed, what they really believe, sometimes in distinction from what they profess and imagine themselves to believe, about the world and life. People who believe that God is a Pharisee are found making a great ado over small sins and complacently committing big ones. They "strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel," as Jesus humorously said.[3] People who believe that God is a Tory are found to be loyal upholders of tradition, staunch supporters of constitutional government, and bitter opponents of any attempt to

[3] Matthew 23:24.

change and improve the conditions of the world. People who believe that "in this world of ours force is the ultimate power" are found advocating preparations for war and scorning the very idea of preparations for peace. Only if they believe that God is love are people found undertaking to do those things which love demands. What men conceive God to be makes a difference. In their own case it makes a profound difference in personal character and ambition. In the world's case, as we can now see, it makes all the difference between a society that can endure and prosper and a civilization that is as a house built on sand.

It is a crucial demand that we should come to see what is the ultimate reality and power of the world. The question, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" [4] is still relevant, and the answer still is "No." But Christianity does not hold that human beings are able by their own unaided efforts to apprehend the nature of ultimate reality. Christianity affirms that God has made himself known to men, that there has been given us "the revelation of God in Christ." And in support of this Christian conviction there is surely much to be said. The idea that God is Christlike is hardly

[4] Job 11:7.

one that human beings, if left to themselves, would have brought to light. Even the ancient Hebrews, who lived in hope of a day when God would make manifest his power and glory, did not dream of any such manifestation of the Divine as appeared in Jesus of Nazareth.

> They all were looking for a king
> To slay their foes and lift them high:
> Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
> That made a woman cry.[5]

We humans are not naturally inclined to think of the Most High in terms of Christ. We are, rather, inclined to think of God in terms of Caesar. It is Caesar, not Christ, who seems to us to possess the kingdom and the power and the glory. Human reason, if left to itself, would never have brought to light the idea that the glory of God is the glory of Christ, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and that the power of God is the power of the Cross. Yet this astonishing idea of God, once it is made known, can and does lay hold of men out of every race and nation and culture. Universally the human heart is able to respond to it. Moreover, it has produced results in the lives of countless individuals and in the ongoing life of

[5] George Macdonald, "That Holy Thing."

the race which go far to validate it. And it fits the facts of history as does no other view of the world and life. The ultimate reality and power of the world *appears* to be such that human policies and practices that are a violation of the righteousness of God revealed in Christ are bound to issue in catastrophe. A humane and enduring culture can be built only on the basis of justice and co-operation for the good of all.

II

Are we quite willing to know what God is? It is far from certain that we are. If we should become convinced that God is Love, it would not be so easy for us to be a Pharisee, a Tory, or a militarist. We would then become painfully aware of those sins against love which the Pharisee is able to view with complacency. We would then feel bound to do away with conditions of inequality and injustice which the Tory is concerned to preserve. We would then find it impossible to act on the assumption that in this world of ours force is the ultimate power; we might feel bound to risk everything on the assumption that the last word is with truth and right and love. So far from attempting to preserve a "civilization"

which, being organized on the basis of individual and national self-interest, inevitably makes for injustice, aggression, and war; we might feel constrained to work for a society which, being organized on the basis of justice and co-operation for the good of all, would make for friendly relations between individuals and between nations—and to do this at whatever cost to ourselves. It is not certain that we are quite willing to know what God is. It is quite certain that the revelation of God in Christ calls for radical changes in the organization of our society and in our individual lives.

But I must be willing to know what God is if I am sincerely to pray, "Hallowed be thy name." Moreover, I am bound, as I offer this petition, to think of others as well as myself. I am bound to cherish a sincere and strong desire that all men shall come to know the truth about God and life. And I am bound in daily life so to speak and act as to convey to others a true and not a false idea of God. What a mockery to pray, "Hallowed be thy name," and then by word or deed create the impression that life, after all, is a bitter struggle in which the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong! This, it must be confessed, has often been done. "Hallowed be thy name"—and may the

gold of Rhodesia, the oil of Iran, the jute of India, the rubber of the Straits Settlements be made to pay big dividends to us who are exploiting them in our own interest. "Hallowed be thy name"—and speed the ship that carries to Japan our instruments of death for the children of China. "Hallowed be thy name"—and grant us success in our attempt, by espionage, trickery, and force, to smash the organizations of labor. What grotesque inconsistency! And this condemnation rests, of course, upon any one of us who prays that the name of God may be hallowed but is himself unjust or unmerciful and unkind.

The grace of God, there is reason to believe, is often mediated through men in whom there is something of God's own lovingkindness. Indeed, some of us know from personal experience that this is true. How did we come to see what God is? Somebody was kind to us when we were sick. Somebody visited us when we were lonely. Somebody helped us in time of trouble. Somebody whom we had shamefully hurt forgave us and treated us far better than we deserved. So it was that our eyes were opened and we came to see that God is Love. Although difficult to believe, it is apparently true that we humans can mediate to

our fellows the grace of God. Despite our manifold limitations and imperfections we can become a medium through which God is able to reveal himself to another human soul. And this, with God's help, we must seek to become, if we are sincerely to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

Today there is desperate need that the true nature of God shall be apprehended and revered. "Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint." [6] They do indeed, where there is no vision of the true nature of God. They commit all manner of folly. They do things that lead to senseless destruction and inhuman slaughter. They are unable to see, much less to do, "the things which belong unto peace." The world at this moment is suffering terribly in consequence of its failure to recognize the truth about the ultimate reality and power of the world.

III

In the present situation it may seem to be true that the ordinary man can be only the servant, or the victim, of the demonic forces which are raging on earth. But this certainly is not true. There is

[6] Proverbs 29:18.

something redemptive which even the ordinary man, with the help of God, can do. If he cannot everywhere put a stop to reckless self-seeking, he can at least put a stop to it so far as he is concerned. If he cannot conquer race prejudice in the ends of the earth, he can at least conquer it in himself. If he cannot put an end to cruelty in the world at large, he can at least undertake in his own relations with others to be kind. And this which he can do is, after all, no small thing.

The American Friends Service Committee is at work in Europe. It is a numerically small committee, and there is much that it cannot do. It cannot stop the war. It cannot keep aged persons or innocent children from being killed or mutilated by falling bombs "aimed only at military objectives." It cannot give food to all who are hungry or medicine to all who are sick. There are, indeed, many things which the American Friends Service Committee is unable to do. But what it can do it is doing. The hungry whom it can feed it is feeding. The sick to whom it can minister it is ministering unto. The desperate whom it can help it is helping. It would like to give aid to all who are in desperate straits. But, seeing that this is impossible, it does not conclude that, alas! there

is nothing to be done. In Christ's name it gladly and efficiently does what it can. And observe the result. Some children are fed. Some human beings are saved from starvation, exposure, disease, and despair. Moreover, it is now widely known that the Quakers steadfastly refuse to take human life and faithfully undertake to save it whenever they can. It is now widely recognized that the Quakers give food to the hungry, regardless of his nationality, race, religion, and political or economic beliefs. In every part of the world there are people who, when they think of the Quakers, feel bound to acknowledge that there is such a thing as self-giving love on earth. And once that fact is recognized, the way is open to belief that God is love.

The name of God is Our Father—a name which we can hallow by learning to live as God's sons. To look upon the world of today with any awareness of its tragedy and peril, to reflect upon the pride, greed, and love of power that have brought the world to its present condition, is to realize that one ought to think and act like a son of God. In our own strength we cannot hallow God's name. The undertaking is far too great for us. But with God's help we can become his sons and

daughters in the sense of caring as he cares for human beings and of making manifest in our relations with others the justice and lovingkindness of God.

THY KINGDOM COME

IN THIS petition the word "kingdom" carries the sense of kingly rule. But the kingly rule of God is not to be thought of in terms of earthly empire. Viewed in the light of their setting, the doxologies of the New Testament are meaningful and important. "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; . . . . to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." [1] "The God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." [2] "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." [3] "Now unto him that is able

[1] Revelation 1:5-6.
[2] I Peter 5:10-11.
[3] Ephesians 3:20-21.

to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."[4] The dominion and glory that are here ascribed to God are not based on force but on costly, redeeming love. The kingdom of God is the kingdom of our Father, who "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."[5] The kingly rule of God is not the rule of political, economic, or military power. It is the rule of truth and right and love.

I

In one sense God now rules within the span of history as well as beyond it. The laws of life are his laws, and failure to obey them involves death and destruction. This was the insight of the great prophets of Israel. When their nation gave itself to idolatry and vice, when it tolerated injustice and oppression, when it began to rely on "horses" and trust in "chariots" and military alliances, when

[4] Jude 24-25.
[5] II Corinthians 4:6.

its rulers began to play power politics, they correctly declared that catastrophe was just around the corner.

The eternal sovereignty of God has been made manifest in every age, including our own. The course of events in the Western world during the past one hundred and fifty years is impressive. At the beginning of this period you see a marvelous material progress, gained, it would seem, despite the fact that its human agents, in most cases, were concerned only for their own enrichment and aggrandizement. But as you look down the years you see, along with amazing technological progress, the awful ugliness of mill towns and mining towns. You see the poverty, degradation, and dirt of metropolitan slums. You see the pinched, hopeless, burnt-out faces of men, women, and children to whom this vaunted progress has brought only misery and want. You see in the far corners of the earth colored peoples to whom it has brought the white man's liquor and his diseases and his contention, backed by military force, that their natural resources belong not to them but to him. And in a world that finds itself in the convulsions of total war you see a dramatic assertion of the eternal sovereignty of God the Father Almighty.

II

In the moral order of the world, as also in the order of nature, God reigns—now and always. There is, however, a rule of God which is contingent on human response to truth and right and love. This is the kingdom of God that is to be, for whose coming we are bidden to pray. Will it ever come on earth? Are human beings capable of doing the will of God in the conditions of their earthly life?

Some Christians believe that the kingdom of God cannot come on earth. On their view there is a world where the reign of God is loyally and gladly accepted, and we may have, even here and now, some apprehension of its glory. But we may not hope that the world of present human experience will ever witness such glory. The world where men eat and drink, marry and have children, work or look in vain for work, play or wish they sometimes had a chance to play, dream of peace but are conscripted for war—this world is under the rule of God only in the sense that it is judged and condemned by eternal laws which it does not and, indeed, cannot obey. Man is so corrupted by egoism and so blinded by pride that he can neither

do nor even see "the things which belong unto peace." The kingdom of God, in the sense of prophetic hopes and dreams, cannot be within history; it can only be beyond history as an eternal order which men may hope to enter after this life if, before they die, they recognize and acknowledge their true condition and throw themselves on the mercy of God.

This conviction, which has long been found in Christian theology in Continental Europe, is now being voiced in the United States. According to this view, as held by some in our midst, the kingdom of God can never come on earth. Sinful man cannot obey the law of love. He cannot do what he ought to do, even with the help of God. He can only hope to be forgiven despite his sins and follies. The grace of God is not a divine power by which men are made over; it is rather a divine mercy by which men, if they are truly penitent, are pardoned. From this it follows that the hope of a redeemed society on earth is a pathetic illusion. The most we can hope for is "the balancing of power with power" in the relations of nations and of economic groups—and such justice among men as this may make possible. Moreover, it requires to be recognized that a balance of power, though

it may for a time keep human selfishness in check, leaves human nature unchanged. It does not, of course, overcome but only represses the pride and greed of men, by which it is always in danger of being destroyed. Hence, injustice, oppression, and open conflict between individuals and between nations will probably be, to the end of history, a recurrent experience of the human race.

On this view the ethical teaching of Jesus is not a way of life in this world. It is "relevant" to man's life on earth. It may serve as a standard by which every human policy and practice requires to be judged. It may serve as a principle of choice between evils and between partial goods. It may keep alive in men an uneasy conscience; it may compel them to acknowledge their incapacity and sinfulness; it may lead them to appeal to the mercy of God. But it may not be a way of life. It is "relevant," but it is quite impracticable. Hence we are not bound to live by the law of love, though we should, of course, confess and bewail our failure to do so. In the political and economic spheres we are bound only to seek such justice as may be achieved by the balancing of power with power. And, seeking that, we may sometimes violate the law of love. In fact, it may sometimes be neces-

sary for us to violate it in determined resistance to evil. In the conditions that now obtain in the world it is silly to ask, "What would Jesus do?" It is not a question of what Jesus would do but rather of what human nature is capable of doing. And human nature is not capable of "following" Christ, whose ethic belongs to a transcendental world and is "not immediately applicable to the task of securing justice in a sinful world." It is absurd to say that we should not resort to organized deception or that we should not bomb or starve aged persons and women and children because we cannot imagine Christ doing it. Of course we cannot imagine Christ doing it, but it does not necessarily follow that we should not do it. Confronted with outrageous tyranny and brutality, we are bound to use such weapons of resistance as we, being sinful men, are able to use. If the only weapons we are able to use are the devil's own weapons, we must consent, however reluctantly, to employ them; we must not, in the name of "Christian perfectionism," refuse to employ them. They who, believing that the law of love cannot be practiced, undertake to accommodate themselves to the "relativities of politics" may

feel bound, *in a given situation,* to recognize no law save the law of military necessity.

Is it true that the ethic of Jesus is not, in this world, a way of life but only a standard of judgment? "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." [6] When he put down these words in a letter to one of his churches, did Paul intend them to be regarded merely as a standard of judgment? "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." [7] Do these words present not a way of life but only a standard of judgment? "But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless

[6] Ephesians 4:31-32.
[7] Philippians 2:1-4.

them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you. . . . . Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." [8] Was this saying only meant to serve as a principle of choice between evils? What was the conviction of Jesus when he bade men to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth"? Did he believe that on earth the will of God cannot be done? No doubt it is easier to appeal to God's mercy than to do his will. But though we are bound at the end of the day to seek the forgiveness of God, on whose authority are we permitted to begin the day without trying to do the will of God?

There are many indications that for Jesus the kingdom of God was not only future but present, not only coming but *already beginning to come.* According to Mark, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming good news from God and saying: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." [9] Professor C. H. Dodd of the University of Cambridge believes that Mark's Greek requires to be translated, "The kingdom of God *has come.*" And he

[8] Luke 6:27-28, 36.
[9] Mark 1:15.

calls attention to other passages which almost certainly indicate the belief that the kingdom is already a reality and power on earth:

Matthew 12:28: "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you," or "has overtaken you" (Goodspeed), or "has reached you already" (Moffatt).

Luke 10:23: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I say unto you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not." ("That which prophets and kings . . . . desired is naturally to be understood as the final assertion of God's sovereignty in the world, the coming of 'the kingdom of God.' This it is that the disciples of Jesus 'see and hear.'")

Luke 11:31-32: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater [the Greek word is neuter, not masculine] than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of

Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here." ("What is this 'something greater' than Jonah the prophet and Solomon the wise king? Surely it is that which prophets and kings desired to see, the coming of the kingdom of God.") [10]

It is now the belief of many New Testament scholars that Jesus viewed the kingdom of God not only as a transcendent reality whose full glory was yet to be made manifest on earth but also as a present reality and power in the world. On this view it is surely possible to suppose that Jesus regarded his ethical teaching as something to be put into practice here and now. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" [11]—*the kingdom that has already begun to come.* There were those who did not believe what he said. But some, including notorious sinners, did believe in him; and he said to those who refused to believe: "Verily

[10] See C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Scribner's), pp. 44-45; also his *History and the Gospel.* The force of Professor Dodd's contention that for Jesus the kingdom was already a reality in this world is now being recognized, even by those who do not accept, or are unable fully to accept, his theory of "realized eschatology." *Christendom,* Winter, 1941, contains an important article on this subject by Professor Frederick C. Grant of the Union Theological Seminary, New York.

[11] Matthew 5:20.

I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go [or "are going"—Moffatt, as also Goodspeed] into the kingdom of God before you" [12]—*not some wholly transcendent and future kingdom, but the kingdom that has already begun to come on earth.* In their own strength men cannot possibly do the things that are required of those who "enter into the kingdom of God." Who in his own strength can love his enemy or even his neighbor as himself? Who can live without self-regarding anxiety? Who can be pure in heart? But when the disciples, having heard the saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," asked, "Then who can be saved?" the reply was, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God." [13] Believing that all things are possible with God, Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" [14]—*here and now!*

As for the early Christians, it is clear that they looked for the coming of the kingdom of God on earth; it is clear that they believed the kingdom in

[12] Matthew 21:31.
[13] Mark 10:25-26.
[14] Luke 12:32.

its fullness would come soon by divine intervention; and it is clear that they had present experience of the transforming power of the Spirit of God. Paul can write: "There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ; what is old is gone, the new has come." [15] He can say to his converts: "God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . . . and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places." [16] He can say of himself: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." [17] What is the New Testament about, if not the wonder of God's recent and present action for the salvation of men?

Certainly it is a basic affirmation of traditional Christianity that God through Jesus Christ entered into history with saving power. For Christianity, as for Hebraism and Judaism, God is "the living God," active in history. Multitudes of Christians have believed that God is at work in the world and that his grace is not only a mercy that pardons but a power that transforms. In

[15] II Corinthians 5:17. (Moffatt's translation.)
[16] Ephesians 2:4.
[17] Philippians 4:13.

contradistinction to a theology that placed stress solely upon the idea of "justification," John Wesley stressed the idea of "sanctification" as well. He refused to believe that the most we can hope for is a divine mercy that takes "intention for achievement" and treats men as if they were righteous although, in fact, they are not righteous. He dared to believe that there is at work in the world a transcendent love and power that is able to help men to become righteous. In contrast to a church that gave no help or thought to the depressed classes of society, early Methodism brought the Gospel to a degraded proletariat. To illiterate and besotted miners, spinners, and costermongers it said: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, *and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" [18] And in a century which Carlyle summed up in the phrase, "Soul extinct, stomach well alive"; in a country of which John Richard Green the historian wrote, "The poor were ignorant and brutal to a degree impossible to realize; the rich were given to an almost utter disbelief in God linked to a foulness of life now happily almost inconceivable," the Evangeli-

[18] I John 1:9. (Italics mine.)

cal Revival was used of God to lift human life to a higher level.

Men can, by the grace of God, be radically transformed. That, I will make bold to say, is an utterance of Christian faith. And they who have this faith in them need not feel called upon to dogmatize on what is possible in history. (Who can say what the future holds, seeing that God is at work in his world?) They need not believe that the most that this world can *ever* hope for is such justice as may be achieved on the basis of a precarious balance of power. They need not suppose that a situation may develop in which men can do no other than bomb or starve helpless civilians, confessing all the while that they are sinners under condemnation of the law of Christ, but consenting to use the devil's weapons in dealing with their fellow sinners. They may look for a society in which the multitude of men will be given a fair chance to realize the divine possibilities that are within them. They may look for a social order in which the amazing productivity of applied science will be geared to the satisfaction of human needs and not, as it now is, to the satisfaction of human pride and greed and love of power. They may look for a world organized on the basis of justice

and opportunity for all, so that the races and nations of men will not impoverish and degrade themselves in insane attempts to destroy one another but will peaceably dwell together on all the face of the earth. They may believe that the kingdom of God, though it may never fully come on earth, can come in ways that exceed any social good we now know or dream of.

Also, they who have this faith in them may believe that there is no simple, no easy, way out of the world's misery, but only the way of truth and love and sacrifice, which calls for trust in God. They may believe that the ethic of Jesus *is* immediately applicable to "the task of securing justice in a sinful world"; that they are, in fact, bound to use Christ's methods and not the devil's. They may doubt that the commands of Christ can be fully obeyed on earth and nonetheless believe that the law of love, and not the law of the jungle or the law of military necessity, must be permitted to order their lives. They may believe that "we never do and never can love our enemies, or even our friendly neighbors, as we love ourselves" and yet feel bound to try, with the help of God, to do so. Aware of their own egoism and selfishness, they may earnestly seek the forgiveness of God and his

constant direction and help. Humbly they may place themselves in God's hands for such work as he may give them to do *and empower them to accomplish.*

III

The Madras Conference said: "For Christ, the kingdom of God was central. He called His followers to seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness. Through acceptance of His call to suffering love and through trust in divine help, men are summoned to be coworkers with Him for the increase of justice, truth and brotherhood upon earth." [19] It is doubtless true that men are called to be "sharers with God in his work." [20] In their belief that we are bound to do what we can to put an end to social evils which bruise the bodies and souls of men the prophets of the social gospel were surely not mistaken. If it is rightly understood, the idea of "building the Kingdom" is true and inspiring. But it is not rightly understood if men come to believe that it is "up to" them to build on earth the kingdom of God. The accent then falls on man and his efforts instead of on God and his

[19] *The Authority of the Faith,* Madras Series, I, 174; International Missionary Council.

[20] The probable, though not certain, meaning of I Corinthians 3:9.

grace, with resultant increase of human pride. Indeed, men who get the idea that it rests with them to build the kingdom of God may find it fatally easy to identify the will of God with their own will-to-power. They may develop a messianic complex which leads them to believe that they are called of God to reform the world—according to their own ideas of what it should be. And woe to the world if it does not want to be thus reformed! It *shall* have a "new order" in Asia or in Europe, whether it wants it or not! It *shall* have freedom of worship—and Anglo-Saxon domination—or take the consequences! When men get the idea that the world's salvation depends on them, they are likely to develop a desire to dominate that is mischievous and a self-righteousness that is blinding. Recognizing the guilt of others, they may fail to recognize their own guilt. Seeing what others should do, they may fail to see what they must themselves do if there is to be any real improvement in the conditions of the world. The world does indeed require to be made over, but it is not likely to be made better by human beings who have the idea that on them its salvation depends.

The eternal kingdom of God does not require to

be built. It requires to be apprehended. It is for us to see that God reigns and that, as for ourselves, we have the option of accepting his rule or inviting disaster.

In the sense of prophetic dreams and hopes, the kingdom of God has partly come on earth. It came when Jesus of Nazareth appeared among men. It came in the truth that he revealed. It came in the love that he made manifest. It came in the power that worked through him, by which the blind were made to see and the deaf to hear and the lame to walk and the poor had good news brought to them and the sinful and despairing were lifted up into a new life and hope. This power is now in the world, available to all men and able to save to the utmost. The kingdom of God is here; it is for us to receive it "as a little child," as Jesus said.[21] Its reception, it should be added, involves persistent devotion to the welfare of others of every race and nation and class, which in our time—and for a long time to come—is likely to be costly. Jesus said: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." [22]

[21] Mark 10:15.
[22] Matthew 16:24.

In its fullness the kingdom of God is still to come. It may be that it will never come on earth in all its glory. But as God lives it can and will come in ways that surpass our present dreams of social good. It is for us to pray for its coming, and to place ourselves unreservedly in the hands of God, that we may be used of him to change and improve the conditions of the world.

When the kingdom of God is thought of in terms of "the increase of justice, truth, and brotherhood on earth," and not merely in terms of the increase of material comforts, it becomes quite clear that only redeemed men who remain humbly conscious of their need of divine mercy and help can be "sharers with God in his work." It is surely better for us to seek to be God's servants than to regard ourselves as his "fellow workers."

Present-day science looks for the eventual extinction of human life on earth. But the kingdom of God is for ever. And in the words of the Madras Conference, "The kingdom of God will be consummated in the final establishment of His glorious reign of love and righteousness, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth where death and sin shall be no more."

THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN HEAVEN, SO ON EARTH

DO WE really want to see the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven? Are we personally prepared for such a change in the structure of human society as would come if the will of God should be done in the political and economic order of the world? Do we truly desire that God's will shall have free course in us, informing our attitudes and governing our practices?

I

As regards the will of God it is possible to have conflicting ideas and emotions. The same person may believe (1) that he ought to do the will of God and (2) that he will be happier if he does not do it. He may believe that the will of God is something to be accepted, if accepted it must be, with the restrained enthusiasm with which one accepts the loss of the savings of a lifetime.

Human attitude toward the will of God is largely affected by human egoism. A man may

think he knows better than God does what is good; or he may deliberately prefer his own will, which seeks selfish gain and comfort, to the will of God, which commands him to love his neighbor as himself. But human feeling about the will of God is often the product of false conceptions. Medieval man attributed all untimely deaths to the wrath of God, or to "the inscrutable decrees of an all-wise Providence."[1] Epidemics that resulted from vast accumulations of filth[2] were ascribed to the deliberate action of God—and met with penitential psalms and processions. Even in recent years bereaved mothers have been urged to seek comfort in the belief that it was God who—for reasons known only to him—willed the death of their children, although the death was due to conditions which might and should have been prevented. And it is still true that in case of fire the owner of a razed building, under some forms of contract, is bound within a specified time to repair the damage or

[1] On this view there is something more than humor in the mistake made by the illiterate preacher who referred to God's "unscrupulous decrees."

[2] "A regular feature of the house was its imposing dung heap, which arose in front of the door. In the main squares stood a draw well, usually a most unhygienic object. Then, too, the practice obtained of throwing everything out on the street, refuse, filth or dead animals."—Friedell, *A Cultural History of the Modern Age* (Knopf), p. 105.

suffer punishment, "subject only to unavoidable delay caused by strikes, public enemies, and acts of God." (A notable association of ideas!) It is still a not uncommon practice to associate the will of God with whatsoever things are disagreeable, whatsoever things are painful, whatsoever things are heartrending and mystifying.

It is surely possible, however, to take a very different view of the divine will. God creates and maintains an order of nature which provides essential conditions of human existence and human development. It is not necessary to suppose that he directly wills every drouth that scorches, every wind that destroys. Nature's "untoward" events may be regarded as "the inevitable by-product of the world order which, as a whole, and by means of its uniformity, is a prerequisite of the actualization of the highest good that we can conceive a world as embodying." [8] God wills and maintains a moral order in which "the wages of sin is death." He does not will the tragic plight of underpaid and underfed sharecroppers. He does not will economic disasters in which many lose all their savings and millions are left unemployed.

[8] Tennant, *Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge University Press), II, 204.

He does not will the losses, horrors, and degradations of war. Such evils are not the result of God's activity in history. "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: . . . . it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."[4] Such disasters come, not because God wills them, but because men persistently refuse to do the will of God.

II

The will of God *requires* to be done on earth as it is in heaven. "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our heart knows no rest till it rests in Thee." This famous saying of Augustine states a fact about man which is profoundly determinative. Man is made for felllowship with God. He may descend to the level of the beast, or even below it, but beastliness is not in accord with his true nature. He may be tyrannical and cruel, but he is not by nature bound to be "a wolf to his fellow man." He is fearfully inclined to be egoistic and selfish, but egoism is so far from being in accord with his true nature that when it reaches an advanced stage it becomes a disease, as neurotics and megalomaniacs may tragically serve to remind us. Despite his egoistic tendencies to pride and

[4] Matthew 18:10, 14.

selfishness, man is capable of self-transcendence and even of self-sacrifice. He is able to look at the world and life from the standpoint of a divine compassion and readiness to spend and be spent for others. And this is his true nature, as he knows when he "comes to himself." He is indeed made for fellowship with his Father who is in heaven. When he refuses the will of God, he refuses to be "himself"—goes contrary to the constitution of his own being—and the result is bound to be frustration and unhappiness, if not moral degradation. "In His will is our peace," as Dante said.

Also, man is "designed," in the words of the Madras Conference,[5] "to live in fellowship with his brothers in the family of God on earth." To be sure, he can refuse to regard his fellow man as a brother. He can despise "the masses" and treat them as if they were merely "parts" of a great industrial machine. He can seek "cheap labor," fearing and opposing any "trend" toward a more equitable distribution of the fruits of toil. He can look down upon people of another race and color; he can even exploit them in his own interest

[5] World Conference of Christians held under the auspices of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, Madras, India, December 12-29, 1938.

and use them as cannon fodder in the wars of imperialism. But he can do this only at his peril. Carlyle once commented on the case of a poor Irish widow who sickened with typhus fever and who, left unattended, took to her bed and died, but not before she had innocently infected seventeen other persons living in her neighborhood who also sickened and died. His comment was: "Her typhus fever killed them; they were her brothers, even though they denied it." The relevance of this comment to the present situation is obvious. We are paying dearly for our injustice and neglect. Economically we are in a bad way, partly—if not largely—because of our failure to distribute widely and fairly the fruits of toil. Underpaid millions were our brothers, even though we denied it. And we are now involved in a Second World War which is a bitter proclamation of our failure to organize the world on the basis of justice and opportunity for all.

Jesus said: "If God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all

these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. *But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* [6] As all must admit, we have *not* sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. The getting of material goods has been our chief concern. Materialism has been the practical creed of millions. A great number of us have made our "aim in life" the things that "pagans" seek—private wealth and luxuries, social position, prestige and power. The primary aim of the industrial world has been, not the satisfaction of human need, but rather the satisfaction of human desires such as are a defiance of the righteousness of God. In the words of the Malvern Conference: [7] "To a large extent production is carried on not to supply the consumer with goods but to bring profits to the producer; and the producer in turn is often subordinated to the

[6] Matthew 6:30-33. The Moffatt translation is: "Do not be troubled, then, and cry, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'what are we to drink?' or, 'how are we to be clothed?' (*pagans make all that their aim in life*) for your heavenly Father knows quite well you need all that. Seek God's Realm and his goodness, and all that will be yours over and above." (Italics mine.)

[7] A conference of members of the Church of England, both clerical and lay, held at Malvern in 1940 under the auspices and leadership of the Archbishop of York.

purely financial ends of those who own the capital plant or supply the credit to erect or work it." We have not sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and unto us have been "added" poverty in the midst of potential plenty, large-scale unemployment, industrial strife, and two world wars! As the Malvern Conference also said: "This method of ordering industry, which tends to treat human work and human satisfaction alike as means to a false end—namely, monetary gain —becomes a source of unemployment at home and dangerous competition for markets abroad. We have seen the unemployment of Germany cured by an armament program, whether adopted primarily for this purpose or not, and have cured our own, though (even so) not completely, by the same means. The system under which we have lived has been a predisposing cause of war, even though those who direct and profit by it have desired peace."

The will of God requires to be done. It must be done in the life of the individual if he is to attain his highest possible development and know any real happiness or peace. It must be done in the political and social orders if civilization is to endure and progress. In "The Hound of Heaven"

Francis Thompson, with true insight, has God say, "All things betray thee who betrayest me."

III

What is the will of God for men? In January, 1940, the editors of the most ambitious and expensive magazine in the United States published a statement which said:

> We are asked to turn to the church for our enlightenment, but when we do so we find that the voice of the church is not inspired. The voice of the church today, we find, is the echo of our own voice. . . . . When we consult the church we hear only what we ourselves have said. And the result of this experience . . . . is disillusionment. . . . . The way out is the sound of a voice, not our voice, but a voice coming from something not ourselves, in the existence of which we cannot disbelieve. It is the earthly task of the pastors to hear this voice, to cause us to hear it, and to tell us what it says. If they cannot hear it, or if they fail to tell us, we as laymen are utterly lost.

The editors of *Fortune*, however, would seem to be not wholly convinced of the incompetence of laymen to hear and interpret the voice of God; for in their issue of January, 1941, they charge that the spiritual leaders of this country have abdicated leadership, seeing that as regards the foreign

policy of the United States they have *not* echoed the voice of the editors of *Fortune!*

Well, the church, whether it speaks through its clergy or through its laity, may well hesitate to announce that what it is saying is, beyond question, the absolute truth. For any group of human beings to assume that, in respect of any and every current issue, they undoubtedly know what the will of God is would be risky, to say the least. It would be safer to assume that none of us is in the possession of absolute truth. It is of the Christian faith, however, that God has not left us in the dark as to the nature and demands of his righteou will but has in Jesus Christ revealed to us the standards and principles which should govern our conduct.

In the summer of 1937 a World Conference of Christians, representing 43 nations and 119 communions, was held in Oxford. This Conference, of which the author was privileged to be a member, undertook to discover the will of God in relation to the social order. Its "findings" have a value that no individual statement could have. A few quotations from its "Message and Decisions" are here given.

On Christian teaching in relation to the economic order, the Conference said:

Christian teaching should deal with ends, in the sense of long-range goals, standards, and principles in the light of which every concrete situation and every proposal for improving it must be tested. . . . . We suggest five such ends or standards, by way of example, as applicable to the testing of any economic situation.

1) Right fellowship between man and man being a condition of man's fellowship with God, every economic arrangement which frustrates or restricts it must be modified —and in particular such ordering of economic life as tends to divide the community into classes based upon differences of wealth and to occasion a sense of injustice among the poorer members of society. To every member of the community there must be made open a worthy means of livelihood. The possibilities of amassing private accumulations of wealth should be so limited that the scale of social values is not perverted by the fear and the envy, the insolence and the servility, which tend to accompany extreme inequality.

2) Regardless of race or class every child and youth must have opportunities of education suitable for the full development of his particular capacities, and must be free from those adventitious handicaps in the matter of health and environment which our society loads upon large numbers of the children of the less privileged classes. In this connection, the protection of the family as a social unit should be an urgent concern of the community.

3) Persons disabled from economic activity, whether by sickness, infirmity, or age, should not be economically penalized on account of their disability, but on the con-

trary should be the object of particular care. Here again the safeguarding of the family is involved.

4) Labour has intrinsic worth and dignity, as being designed by God for man's welfare. The duty and the right of men to work should therefore alike be emphasized. In the industrial process labour should never be considered as a mere commodity. In their daily work men should be able to recognize and fulfil a Christian vocation. The working man, whether in field or factory, is entitled to a living wage, wholesome surroundings, and a recognized voice in the decisions which affect his welfare as a worker.

5) The resources of the earth, such as the soil and mineral wealth, should be recognized as gifts of God to the whole human race, and used with due and balanced consideration for the needs of the present and future generations.[8]

On the question of property rights, the Conference said:

1) It should be reaffirmed without qualification that all human property rights are relative and contingent only in virtue of the dependence of man upon God as the giver of all wealth and the creator of man's capacities to develop the resources of nature. This fundamental Christian conviction must express itself both in the idea of stewardship or trusteeship and in the willingness of the Christian to examine accumulations of property in the light of their social consequences.

2) The existing system of property rights and the exist-

[8] *Official Reports of the Oxford Conference* (Universal Christian Council, 297 Fourth Ave., New York), p. 98. Used by permission.

ing distribution of property must be criticized in the light of the largely nonmoral processes by which they have been developed, and criticism must take account of the fact that every argument in defense of property rights which is valid for Christian thinking is also an argument for the widest possible distribution of these rights.

3) It should further be affirmed that individual property rights must never be maintained or exercised without regard to their social consequences or without regard to the contribution which the community makes in the production of all wealth.

4) It is very important to make clear distinction between various forms of property. The property which consists in personal possessions for use, such as the home, has behind it a clearer moral justification than property in the means of production and in land which gives the owners power over other persons. All property which represents social power stands in special need of moral scrutiny, since power to determine the lives of others is the crucial point in any scheme of justice. The question must always be asked whether this is the kind of power which can be brought under adequate social control or whether it is of the type which by its very nature escapes and evades social control.[9]

On the international order, the Conference said:

Relations between States have been and still are conceived and carried on chiefly in terms of power. The traditional criterion of what constitutes a "Great Power" is a standing challenge to Christian people, more espe-

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

cially to those who are citizens of "Great Powers" . . . .

So far as the present evil is political, the heart of it is to be found in the claim of each national State to be judge in its own cause. The abandonment of that claim, and the abrogation of absolute national sovereignty, at least to that extent, is a duty that the Church should urge upon the nations.

But political remedies of this kind are not enough. The evil lies deeper down, in the ingrained habits and attitudes which find expression in the power-relationship. Within the State power has been curbed by constitutional checks and has been made subject to a sense of responsibility. In the international field and often in relationship to colonial dependencies power is still, broadly speaking, irresponsible. It is here that the Christian Church and individual Christians have an opportunity to bring their influence to bear upon international relations. For the power-relationship is not merely uncivilized: it is also utterly un-Christian. "Render unto Caesar" is not a counsel of acquiescence or of despair. Unless we are prepared to cut our life into two utterly separate halves we must admit that it is our duty to do all that in us lies to bring Caesar—the traditions and practices of government—to the recognition of his duty to God.

All law, international as well as national, must be based on a common ethos—that is, a common foundation of moral convictions. To the creation of such a common foundation in moral conviction the Church as a supranational society with a profound sense of the historical realities, and of the worth of human personality, has a great contribution to make.

The fact that no superior political agency exists to im-

pose from time to time a new order in international affairs to conform to changing needs means not that the existing order will remain static but that change can occur in only one of two ways—namely, by voluntary action or by force, or the menace of force.

It therefore particularly devolves upon Christians to devote themselves to securing by voluntary action of their nations such changes in the international order as are from time to time required to avoid injustice and to promote equality of opportunity for individuals throughout the world. . . . .

Once the need of change is apprehended, its accomplishment depends upon governmental action. This will require of statesmen and politicians a broader vision than now exists of the true welfare of their nation. The heads of States, under whatever form of government, are ultimately dependent upon the support of their people, who must make it clear that they are prepared to accept temporary sacrifices in order that a greater good may ultimately emerge.

The unequal distribution of natural bounties is one of the causes of war, if control is used to create a monopoly of national advantages. Christian people should move their governments to abstain from such policies and to provide a reasonable equality of economic opportunity.[10]

IV

The prayer, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," should, of course, be a *prayer,* and not merely an attempt to impose upon God one's own

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 156.

ideas and desires—which is not prayer but presumption. When men pray it is extremely important that they should recognize the limitations of their own understanding and the corruptions of their own desires. Prayer that the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven, if it truly is prayer, is earnest pleading that the divine purpose shall be realized, irrespective of our own ideas and desires.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

JESUS was a poor man. His mother, there is reason to suppose, was early left a widow with seven children depending on her for support. He knew the meaning of a widow's "two mites," [1] and what a disaster the loss of a coin can be.[2] He knew the necessity of wearing clothes that have been patched.[3] He knew the economy required of a housewife whose marketing, at times, must be confined to the purchase of birds, of which two may be had for a penny.[4] He knew that people can, when they must, get along on very little. He also knew from personal experience how very important a loaf of bread can be. He declared that God recognizes our imperative need of bread. He advised his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

[1] Mark 12:42.
[2] Luke 15:8.
[3] Luke 5:36.
[4] Matthew 10:29.

I

From very early times attempts have been made to "spiritualize" this petition. Opportunity to do so has been afforded by the adjective "daily." What kind of bread is "daily" bread? The Greek word which the English word "daily" has been chosen to represent appears nowhere else in the New Testament. In fact, it appears nowhere else in Greek literature. Its usage cannot, therefore, be determined from other contexts. It is possible that Jesus spoke on this occasion his native tongue, which was Aramaic. It is possible that he used an Aramaic word for which the Evangelists could find no Greek equivalent. It is possible that they coined a word to represent what he said. In any event, they used a word whose exact meaning it is now impossible to determine and thus left open the way to a spiritual interpretation of this petition.

In the third century Origen suggested that daily bread is "supersubstantial" or "heavenly" bread. In an eleventh century manuscript now in the British museum, Jesus is made to say, "Give us today for bread the word of God from heaven." Even Erasmus, humanist though he was, insisted upon giving a spiritual meaning to this petition.

He could not believe that Jesus advocated prayer for anything as material as a loaf of bread. It is quite certain, however, that what Jesus had in mind was bread for the body. Even today New Testament scholars disagree as to the meaning of the Greek word which was employed by the Evangelists. Professor Goodspeed thinks it means "bread for the day." Professor Moffatt thinks it means "bread for the morrow." But they both believe that what Jesus had in mind was bread for the body, as is now the belief of all New Testament scholars.

The attempt to spiritualize this petition is but one of many manifestations of a dualism in Western thought which has long undertaken to make a sharp distinction of soul and body, spiritual and material, sacred and secular. Many Christians have felt called upon to be "magnificently superior" to economic questions and problems. They have considered it a mark of spiritual distinction to say that it is only the soul that matters, not the body, not the political or economic situation, not the physical or social environment. People who take this view of the matter are seldom if ever found living in slums. They are usually found living in favorable conditions on incomes

that provide not only the necessities of life but not a few luxuries. They are never found suffering from malnutrition. They always know where their next meal is coming from. Some of them in this country have introduced the pleasant English custom of serving tea at four o'clock in the afternoon. Yet they may, for all this, sincerely believe that to be spiritual is to be indifferent to the needs of the body and the conditions of the world.

Jesus made no such distinction of soul and body. He came, he said, "to preach good tidings to the poor; . . . . to proclaim release to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." [5] He healed men's bodies as well as their minds. He had "compassion" on a hungry crowd and saw to it that they were fed.[6] He did not conceive of religion as being "a particular aspect of life to be distinguished from other aspects that are not religious." For him religion was coextensive with the whole of life.

Modern science has demonstrated that man is an inseparable unity of body and soul. We now know that a human being is neither a physical or-

[5] Luke 4:18.
[6] Mark 8:1ff.; Matthew 15:32ff.; Luke 9:11ff.

ganism only, nor a mind or soul only, but both indivisibly. We know that anxiety and worry can affect the movements of the stomach and the colon so as to produce certain diseases of digestion. We know that bodily conditions can affect a man's outlook on life, his religious faith, and his moral conduct. We know that in human personality there is an ever-present relation of body and soul. We are beginning to see the significance of Christian faith, which does not say, "I believe in the immortality of the soul," but rather says, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting"; by which it does not mean that the body that is laid in the grave will one day be reanimated but that human personality in its entirety will be preserved. "That which thou sowest," writes Paul, "thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own. . . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead." [7]

Much that we have not seen we should now, in the light of what we certainly know, begin to see. We should recognize the economic basis not only of human existence but also of human culture and

[7] I Corinthians 15:37, 38, 42.

spiritual development. We should recognize the imperative need of a decent living standard for all men. We should realize that bread may be a means of grace, that people who have enough to eat may come to believe that there is a God who is love, whereas people who live on mean streets in shabby neighborhoods under conditions of extreme privation may find it next to impossible to believe that such a thing as mercy, pity, compassion is anywhere to be found.

II

Jesus bids us to pray for bread. It is to be noted, however, that he does not bid us to pray for cake. Whether we should pray, "Give us today bread for the day," or, "Give us today bread for the morrow," or, as some scholars now think, "Give us today such bread as is needed for health and strength," in any case, it is bread that we are bidden to pray for, not cake. "Daily bread" can be made to cover not only food but clothing and shelter and medical and dental care. It can be made to cover anything that is needed to enable us to make our largest possible contribution to the service of God and man. It cannot be made to cover all manner of luxuries. To pray for daily

bread is hardly to pray for a meal that costs per plate as much as a poor family is required to live on for a week. We are not bidden to pray for luxuries that do not contribute to our health and strength but only to our pride; or for private possessions that, so far from enabling us to serve others, make us a privileged class which others are required to serve.

Just where to draw the line it is not easy to say. What one man considers a luxury another man, no less conscientious, may consider a necessity. Moreover, what to a man in good health undoubtedly is a luxury may actually be a necessity to a man in poor health. And it may be true—or a deplorable rationalization!—that the material needs of the professional man are somewhat more numerous than those of the manual laborer. It is not easy to draw the line, and we may safely assume that we are not called of God to draw it for anyone else. We shall have quite enough to do if we undertake to draw it for ourselves. In fact, it is only by the grace of God that we may even hope to draw it at the right point for ourselves. But we are bound to draw it somewhere. There is for each one of us a dividing line between things that we may properly regard as necessities and things

that we cannot have or seek after without sinning against God, our fellows, and ourselves. If we continue to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," one of two things is bound to happen. This petition will either become on our lips as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, or it will become in our hearts a strong desire and decision to live simply, as simply as we can live and keep going in the way of service to God and man.

There is dynamite in the New Testament, as has often been said. And no little of it is to be found in this prayer for bread. We are bidden to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," not, "Give *me* this day *my* daily bread." This prayer obliges us to think of others. It places us under moral obligation to seek the economic good of others. It is mockery to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," if our own table is already overloaded. It is blasphemous to do so if we are taking for ourselves—by legal means—bread that belongs to others, or consenting to a situation in which millions of men are deprived of employment and condemned to live, at public expense, on the level of bare subsistence.

Jesus once drew a picture of something that is

still to be found on earth.[8] A certain rich man is splendidly housed, expensively clothed, excessively fed; a certain poor man is brought daily to the imposing entrance of the rich man's estate—brought by others, being himself too weak to walk—in order that he may feed on the "crumbs"—pieces of bread which overfed diners have used as napkins—that fall from the rich man's table; and as the poor man waits for his unclean scraps dogs come to lick his unattended sores. Long ago Jesus drew this picture of extreme inequality of wealth and opportunity, and then to show how God feels about such inequality he drew another picture. The beggar dies and is "carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom." The rich man also dies, and is buried. Then, stripped of his "purple and fine linen," he finds himself in Hades—and in torment. Why?

In a country church, one of four I was then serving, an earnest layman once prayed for me. He thought I did not know very much, and he was right. He thought my preaching was pretty thin, and he was right. He thought I was headed toward the wrong place. And he said, "O God, in thy mercy save our young brother from the fate of

[8] Luke 16:19-23.

the rich man in the parable who went to hell—why, O Lord, the Good Book does not say!" The mystification of this earnest layman appears to be shared by not a few professional students of the New Testament. One of them has said: "We have to assume that Dives, inasmuch as he was punished, was not only rich but wicked." But the reason for the rich man's discomfiture is not an undisclosed secret. We do not need to assume, in the complete absence of evidence, that Dives was a drunkard or a horse thief or, perhaps, a notorious philanderer. We need only to recognize that as a beneficiary of extreme inequality of wealth and opportunity he was complacent and content.

A world that denies equality of opportunity, condemning millions of human beings to bare existence without hope, is bound, sooner or later, to find itself in Hades—and in torment. In 1929, according to the Brookings Institution, the division of the earnings of industry in the United States was such that "one-tenth of one per cent of the families at the top received practically as much as forty-two per cent of the families at the bottom of the scale." In round figures, thirty-five thousand privileged families received as much of the national income as was given to eleven million

underprivileged families. In 1936, only seven years afterward, the bishops of the (then) Methodist Episcopal Church felt bound to say: "We now know that the kingdom of God cannot be built on the poverty of the many and the cruel and absurd wealth of the few"; and that was putting it mildly. It is now quite clear that what cannot be built on the poverty of the many and the cruel and absurd wealth of the few is not only the kingdom of God but any enduring prosperity or security. It is also clear that glaring inequality of opportunity between races and nations means war—total war. The masses of men want peace. But they will consent to fight before they will consent to starve or to accept permanently a low standard of living. There will be war on earth, ill will among men, so long as there is a privileged class or nation or race whose members either refuse to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," or offer this petition without thought or concern for its ethical and social implications.

For our daily bread we are not only dependent on a financial and industrial process which, if it is to function successfully, must seek the welfare of all men, and not merely the profit of a few; we are also dependent on forces that are not hu-

man but cosmic—soil and rain and sunshine, the whole order of nature. And as the Malvern Conference said: "We must recover reverence for the earth and its resources, treating it no longer as a reservoir of potential wealth to be exploited, but as a storehouse of divine bounty on which we utterly depend."

III

It has often been said that the Lord's Prayer contains two groups of petitions, of which the first has to do with the glory of God and the second with human needs. But this is to say that the glory of God has no relevance to human need. And that, we should now recognize, is the utterance of a dualism which, because it undertakes to make a distinction of spiritual and material that does not exist, has terribly cursed us and can only curse us so long as we assent to it. Does it make no personal difference to me whether the character of God revealed in Christ is recognized and "hallowed"? Or whether the kingdom of God "comes" and the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven? On the contrary, it makes a vast difference. Unless God is recognized and glorified in human thought and practice, I am destined to live

in a world in which there is no enduring prosperity or security but, at least periodically, such misery and madness as our time has known.

It is now of the utmost importance that we should recognize the ever-present relation of body and soul, economic activity and spiritual experience, human need and the glory of God. In recent generations Western man has sought satisfaction for his spiritual hunger in "religious services" which, as he viewed them, were quite unrelated to any actual service of God and humanity. He has acted in the belief that there is no connection between bread for the body and bread for the soul. He has thought it possible for a man to have on his own table, day after day, far more bread for the body than his own body requires—even bread that belongs to his neighbor—and nevertheless to feed his soul on the Bread of Life. But this, of course, is not possible, as many people are beginning to suspect. Have they not gone to church all their lives? Yes, but they have little or no sense of the reality and presence of God. At a time when true religion, if they had it, would make a world of difference they feel bound to confess that such religion as they do have is perfunctory and futile.

If human life is sacred, there must be something

sacred about bread, which is essential to human life. People must have bread, if they are to live and learn and hope and reach for the stars. And if there is something sacred about bread, there must be something sinful in any misuse of bread. To take bread selfishly and use it recklessly in callous disregard for the needs of others is to take and use it to one's own damnation. A religious attitude toward bread, which is all-essential to our political and economic salvation, is the *sine qua non* of any personal salvation for which we may reasonably hope. "Hunger," it has been said, "is a real thing—terribly real; but it is comparatively easy to deal with, and man has deeper needs." [9] But this will hardly do. It is not, after all, an easy thing to give bread to men—all men; and, what is more, those deeper needs which we undoubtedly have cannot be satisfied unless we share God's concern for hungry men and see to it that they are fed. To pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, ... Give us this day our daily bread," and, so praying, to give thought to the needs of others as well as one's own needs; to desire for oneself *and for all others* such bread as is essential for health and strength and spiritual growth, to de-

[9] Glover, *The Jesus of History* (Association Press), p. 117.

velop a conscience about bread, seeing that it may and should be a holy sacrament of the love of God—this is the way to personal salvation.

There is a story told by Luke which may well serve as a parable.[10] Jesus has been put to death, and two of his disciples, thoroughly discouraged, are returning to their own village, which lies in a pocket of the hills five miles west of Jerusalem. On the way they meet the risen Christ; but they do not recognize him. They are strangely drawn to him, however, and when they reach their destination they prevail upon him to stay the night with them. When they come to the table for the evening meal, he takes bread and blesses it and breaks it and gives it to them to eat. *Then* their eyes are opened. As Luke puts it, "He was known to them in the breaking of bread." It may well be the truth that in the getting and sharing of bread we have the greatest of all opportunities to know and have fellowship with God.

[10] Luke 24:13ff.

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS

ACCORDING to Matthew we are bidden to pray, "Forgive us our debts"; according to Luke, "Forgive us our sins"; according to *The Book of Common Prayer,* "Forgive us our trespasses." But what matters is, of course, the sense which the English words "debts," "sins," and "trespasses" now carry. Which, if any, of them voices the thought of Jesus? "Debts" suggests the failure to discharge a financial obligation, "trespasses" the unlawful use of another's property. "Sins," in popular thought, is almost synonymous with "vice," such as drunkenness, gluttony, and sexual immorality. Does any of these words with its present connotations give adequate expression to our Lord's view of moral wrong and failure?

Jesus was incensed by any wrong done to others. He had stern things to say about men who cause

"little ones" to stumble,[1] or who "eat up widows' houses and to cover it up make long prayers."[2] He was equally disturbed by selfish neglect of others. He had words of condemnation for those who neglect their parents[3] and for those who, in any situation, are insensitive to human needs.[4] Moreover, he was profoundly concerned with the inner life, not only with overt acts. He declared that it is wrong and dangerous not only to kill but to hate, and not only to commit adultery but to want to commit it.[5] He saw that evil acts spring from evil thoughts that have secured the backing of selfish desires. "Out of the heart," he said, "come evil designs, murder, adultery, sexual vice, stealing, false witness and slander."[6] And he believed that men should not return evil for evil but should love their enemies and do them good.[7] He believed that men should live simply, without self-regarding anxiety, in trustful dependence on God.[8]

It may hardly be supposed that Jesus' view of moral wrong and failure is adequately presented

[1] Matthew 18:6.
[2] Mark 12:40. (Goodspeed's translation.)
[3] Mark 7:11.
[4] Matthew 25:41ff.
[5] Matthew 5:21ff.
[6] Matthew 15:19. (Moffatt's translation.)
[7] Matthew 5:38; Luke 6:27.
[8] Matthew 6:19ff.; Luke 12:16ff.

by "debts," "sins," or "trespasses." When this petition for forgiveness is offered, it is important to keep in mind all that he said concerning the righteousness of the kingdom of God and its non-observance by men.

The Lord's Prayer assumes that we have all sinned and require to be forgiven. (We are not bidden to pray, "Forgive us *if* we have sinned.") Men greatly vary in respect of their consciousness of guilt. One man loses his temper and feels ashamed; another "bawls out" everybody in sight and thinks nothing of it. One man does a deed that fills him with loathing; another, having committed the same or a similar offense, remains undisturbed. There are marked differences among men who are themselves beneficiaries of extreme inequality of wealth and opportunity. Some live with an uneasy conscience which constrains them to protest against the injustices of the social order and to seek their removal; others accept with complacency a situation which they find favorable to themselves and pronounce maledictions on anyone who proposes to change it. It is to be remembered, however, that the Lord's Prayer was given to men who had come under the influence of Jesus. Is it possible for men to look into the face of Christ

and feel no impulse to say, "Forgive us our sins"? Is it possible for any man to behold the love of God revealed in Christ and see nothing in his own life that requires to be forgiven?

As a matter of fact, what requires to be forgiven is not merely an occasional display of ill temper, or an occasional manifestation of envy and jealousy, or an occasional expression of vindictiveness, or even an occasional deed that is mean and dishonorable. What requires to be forgiven is a self that is strongly inclined toward evil; a self-centeredness that prompts a man to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, to prefer his own security and comfort to the welfare of others, to assess the rightness and value of things—including political and economic policies—by the way in which they affect him, and to approve and seek whatever he conceives to be in his own interest. It is I who need to be forgiven, not only my sins. "I want to do what is right, but wrong is all I can manage; I cordially agree with God's law, so far as my inner self is concerned, but then I find quite another law in my members which conflicts with the law of my mind and makes me a prisoner to sin's law that resides in my members." [9] That

[9] Romans 7:21-23. (Moffatt's translation.)

is what profoundly troubled Paul, as it does every man who has looked into the face of Christ. It is not simply that a man sometimes does things that fill him with remorse and dismay; it is also and chiefly that he is, apparently, the kind of man who *can* do such things and do them repeatedly. Once a man's eyes are open to the moral and spiritual facts about himself, the petition, "Forgive us our sins," becomes a most earnest prayer that he may be made over into a different kind of person who is not persistently inclined toward evil but is strongly inclined toward good.

II

It is commonly supposed that God's forgiveness of sin means the remission of penalty or the overlooking of misdoing. But it is something far more than that in the Christian sense. It is something that God does *to* a man, not merely *for* him. When a man obtains the forgiveness of sins, what happens? He does not always obtain the remission of penalty. He may have to suffer in his body for the wrong he has done to his body. He may have to suffer in his mind for the wrong he has done to others—and to his own true self. He may never be able to forget, or to remember with-

out pain, certain things which he has done in the world. In an extreme case he may have to go to prison for his crime. The forgiveness of sins is not necessarily the remission of penalty. Nor is the remission of penalty necessarily the forgiveness of sins. A doer of evil who has managed to escape detection, social condemnation, and financial or physical hurt may not obtain the forgiveness of sins but may remain to the end the kind of man who can do shady and contemptible things.

When a man obtains the forgiveness of sins, his relation with God becomes right; and the love of God, to which he is now responsive, begins to transform him. First to go is his sense of guilt. In his "Song of Myself" Walt Whitman says:

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins.

But of animals it may also be said: They do not write poetry; they do not produce symphonies; they do not paint canvases or carve marbles; they do not explore the atom or galactic systems; they do not reach for the stars. Animals are lacking in the sensitivity that makes possible the feeling

of guilt—and the development of science, the production of great music and art. Animals have no sense of sin, or of history. They live in the present moment, with little or no recollection of the past, no vision of the future, no apprehension of the Eternal. Man is not merely an animal; he is a son of God. Hence, he *can* lie awake in the dark and weep for his sins. And a persistent feeling of guilt can work havoc in a man, as both priests and physicians know. It can make him sick in mind and in body. It can produce all sorts of functional disorders. It can turn him into an invalid who has neither strength nor hope. But when a man is forgiven, he ceases to be overwhelmed with a sense of guilt. As he now realizes, God, from whom no secrets are hid, has not turned away from him in disgust but has faithfully pursued him and brought him to his senses. He is no longer separated from God, who has mercifully refused to be separated from him. And seeing that God has reclaimed and accepted him, he is able to accept himself.

Next to go when a man is forgiven is the extreme self-centeredness which has been his undoing. Jesus once called attention to the fact that

they to whom much has been forgiven love much.[10] Of course they do; for they have an overwhelming sense of gratitude which seeks expression in acts of mercy and lovingkindness. Moreover, he who has obtained the forgiveness of God can then hardly refuse to trust God. He is therefore able to take his mind off himself and fix it on God. He is able to view the world, and his own place and part in it, from the standpoint of a divine concern which overleaps every historic barrier of race, nation, and class and seeks the welfare of all mankind. He is able to say, "Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God," and to say this trustfully and gladly. When a man obtains the forgiveness of sins, he does indeed become a different person; for he ceases to be self-centered and becomes God-centered. To be sure, this statement cannot stand without qualification. It may be said of Christ that he achieved a complete and persistent dedication of his whole self to God. That this may be said of any other son of man is, I think, extremely doubtful. Even the most saintly of men feel bound to confess that they sometimes "fall" into that forgetfulness of God and concern for self which is man's original sin. Of most of us it cer-

[10] Luke 7:47.

tainly requires to be said that we never reach a point of moral and spiritual development where there is no longer any need to pray, "Forgive us our sins." But there is, after all, a real and important difference between a man who is "all wrapped up in self" and one who is earnestly seeking to know and do the will of God.

III

We may well believe that it is not easy for God to forgive. It cannot be easy for Holy Love to behold such lust, greed, and cruelty as are now to be found on earth. But according to Christian faith, God not only does forgive but himself takes the initiative. "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners,* Christ died for us." [11] That is the Christian faith —and experience. The God whom we have seen and known in Christ does not wait for us to come to our senses before he consents and undertakes to help us. He appeals to us through One who gave up his life that we might have life, who is himself the Truth about life and the Way to life, as we now certainly have abundant reason to believe. He appeals to us through the

[11] Romans 5:8. (Italics mine.)

disasters which come upon us when we deny the Truth which has been revealed to us and refuse the Way which has been provided us. He appeals to us through the voice of conscience, which, unless we deliberately stifle it, cries out against cruelty and infidelity and sham and cowardice. He appeals to us through the pain and anguish of those who are wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He appeals to us through the beauty and sublimity of nature, through the love we have for our children, and through the integrity and kindness of good men and women. In one way or another God continually appeals to "the better angels of our nature." We can separate ourselves from God and from all that is true and right and good, but God steadfastly refuses to abandon us. He does all that can be done in the way of prompting us to seek the forgiveness of sins.

IV

There is, of course, something that we must do if we are to be forgiven. We must repent and respond to the love of God. We must acknowledge not only our sins but our tendency to sin; we must recognize our dependence on God and turn to him

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in penitence, humility, and trust. "Science," in the words of Thomas Henry Huxley, "says, Sit down before facts as a little child; be prepared to give up all preconceived notions; be willing to be led anywhere the facts of nature will lead you or you will know nothing." In other fields, as politics or economics, the scientist, no less than other men, may be self-centered and opinionated; but in his own field he is humble. He does not attempt to impose upon nature his own ideas; he permits nature to speak to him. This is the all-essential condition of scientific discovery and achievement, and like unto it is the condition of forgiveness. He who would be forgiven must come before God as a little child, give up the idea that he is good or wise or in any way self-sufficient, and rely on God for guidance and help.

There is one other condition of forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."[12] Luke says: "Forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us."[13] But it is almost certain that Luke's "for" does not represent the thought of Jesus. The assertion, "We ourselves also forgive

[12] Matthew 6:12.
[13] Luke 11:4.

every one that is indebted to us," is hardly in accord with truth. It is indicative of moral blindness and self-conceit. It conveys the impression that forgiveness is an easy matter which any man may accomplish without the assistance of God. It would be difficult to imagine anything more unlike the mind of Christ than this vain pretense that we ourselves have forgiven everyone who is in need of our forgiveness.

According to Matthew, Jesus, in explanation and emphasis of his thought, said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." [14] Mark, also, reports him as saying: "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." [15]

Now it is inconceivable that the God whom we know in Christ acts on the principle of tit for tat. If God does not forgive us our trespasses unless we forgive them who have trespassed against us, it is not because he refuses to do what he could do

[14] Matthew 6:14-15.
[15] Mark 11:25.

if he had a mind to but only because our own refusal to forgive makes his forgiveness impossible. Our forgiveness of others is not the condition of God's willingness to forgive us; it is the condition of our ability to receive the forgiveness of God. The forgiveness of sins, as has been said, is the transfiguration of personality through fellowship with God. A man cannot be in fellowship with God if God's spirit of forgiveness is not in him. He cannot be forgiven unless he forgives. This is the meaning of the parable of the unmerciful servant.[16] A servant who owes the vast sum of ten thousand talents and who, in accordance with prevailing custom in such cases, is about to be sold into slavery, along with his wife and children, is mercifully forgiven his debt; whereupon he goes to one of his fellow servants who owes him the relatively trifling sum of a hundred shillings, demands immediate payment, and, failing to secure it, has his luckless debtor thrown into prison. Well, he has himself obtained the remission of penalty; but he has not obtained the forgiveness of sins. He remains a hard man, self-centered and cruel.

An unforgiving man cannot be forgiven for the

[16] Matthew 18:21-35.

reason that he has chosen to remain self-centered. His refusal to forgive is due to an overweening concern for himself. He has been cruelly hurt and he cannot forget it, he says. But the fact is that he is unwilling to forget it—unwilling to forget himself in concern for the one who has wronged him. Instead of undertaking to help this fellow mortal who has injured him and *who is therefore in great need of help,* he chooses to nurse a wounded ego and to make it quite clear to all concerned that he is not a man to be trifled with but one who requires to be treated with the consideration that is due him! To be sure, he is himself in need of forgiveness—a fact which might well prompt him to be charitable and merciful. But he chooses to dwell on the "cruel wrong" that has been done to him. He chooses to remain self-centered and self-regarding. Can such a man be forgiven? By his own attitude he makes impossible the forgiveness of God.

It is now generally conceded that the Treaty of Versailles was vindictive. And a Second World War is demonstrating the truth of the saying, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Nations that refuse to show mercy cannot themselves

obtain mercy. Civilization can hardly be saved by means that produce in those who employ them a mentality which closes the door to the forgiveness of God. According to Jesus, we ought to forgive because God forgives. The structure of reality is such that we must forgive if we are to be forgiven.

BRING US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

DOES God lead us into temptation? Not in the sense of luring us to evil! It is inconceivable that our heavenly Father should deliberately entice us. The author of the Epistle of James flatly says: "No one should think when he is tempted that his temptation comes from God, for God is incapable of being tempted by what is evil, and he does not tempt anyone. When anyone is tempted, it is by his own desire that he is enticed and allured." [1]

I

In this last petition of the Lord's Prayer, the Greek word which is commonly translated "temptation" is ambiguous. It may mean that which incites to evil. It may also mean that which puts to the test. It may denote a situation that subjects men to temptation, as, for example, oppor-

[1] James 1:13. (Goodspeed's translation.)

tunity to secure wealth for themselves at the cost of continuing poverty to others. Or it may denote a situation that tries men's souls, as prolonged illness or bereavement or persecution. In the New Testament it is used in both senses, and it is open to belief that instead of saying, "Lead us not into temptation," we are bidden to pray, "Lead us not into trial."

It is a fact, however, that temptation in some form is inescapable. Situations that try men's souls also subject them to temptation. A man who has lost his wife may be tempted to drown his sorrow in drink. A man who learns that he is probably destined to spend the rest of his life in bed or an invalid's chair may be tempted to give way to bitter and impotent resentment. Under present conditions a Belgian whose wife and children are suffering from undernourishment may be tempted to take the job that is offered him in a German munitions factory.

Moreover, situations that try men's souls are not all of a depressing character. People do not weep over prosperity or adulation or the possession of power. Yet these, undoubtedly, put men to the test. To be a rich man or a celebrity or a high ecclesiastic is to be tempted. As a matter of

fact, not many of us appear able to stand prosperity. Fewer still appear able to stand adulation. And it is quite certain that no human being can remain uncorrupted by dictatorial power. Prosperity as well as adversity, success as well as failure, triumph as well as defeat produce a situation that subjects men to temptation. With the help of God we can refuse to sin. We cannot refuse to be tempted.

It is because we are endowed with freedom of choice that we cannot escape temptation. In any situation, we have presented to us alternative courses of conduct. We may be generous or selfish. We may be true or false. We may be brave or be a coward. To be sure, we are not completely free when we come to the moment of action; we are under the constraint of previous moral choices. If we have repeatedly chosen to be brave, we may, when the next demand for courage comes, find it all but impossible to be a coward. If we have formed the habit of generosity, we may in a given situation find it actually easier to give than to refuse. And this is equally true in reverse. If, in consequence of repeated decision to prefer our own comfort and advantage to the welfare of others, we have become a thoroughly selfish per-

son, we may on occasion find it extremely difficult to be generous or courageous. By our previous moral choices we are more or less conditioned, for better or for worse. But it is nonetheless true that we have some freedom of choice, so that we can be, and are, tempted. We never reach a point where no real alternative is presented to us. By the grace of God and much self-discipline we may achieve at last a spiritual maturity which forbids the crudest forms of evil. But even the saintliest of men may be tempted to spiritual pride and self-righteousness.

II

We cannot escape temptation because we are endowed with freedom of choice, and it is God who gives us this freedom. It is therefore true that God leads us into temptation in the sense that he bestows upon us a freedom which makes temptation inevitable. But what if God wants sons and daughters and not puppets? What if God wants human beings who may think his thoughts after him and have fellowship with him and co-operate with him in the building of a community of persons distinguished by reason, affection, and moral goodness? In that event, God

must give us freedom of choice. In a world devoid of freedom there might, perhaps, be mechanical perfection but never the perfection of Christ nor even the possibility of moral and spiritual achievement.

In view of the pain and misery and degradation which come of the misuse of freedom, some men have wished that this perilous gift had never been bestowed upon them. Thomas Henry Huxley once declared: "If some great Power would agree to make me think always what is true and do what is right on condition of being turned into a sort of clock, I should instantly close with the bargain. The only freedom I care about is the freedom to do right; the freedom to do wrong I am ready to part with." [2] But freedom to do only what is right is not freedom; it is mechanical coercion. Freedom to do right is inseparable from freedom to do wrong.

We must be led into temptation if we are to be men and not machines. And we must be led into situations that try our souls. Now and then some human father who has himself known hard sledding decides to make easy for his children the way of life. They shall not be required, as he was,

[2] *Collected Essays,* I, 192.

to get up early in the morning. They shall not be obliged at an early age, as he was, to earn a living. They shall not be deprived, as he was, of things that young people want. They shall be placed in conditions that are wholly favorable and that make no difficult demands. And now and then some human father who has made easy for his children the way of life finds himself wondering why they have made so little of themselves. He has given them every possible opportunity, and he cannot understand why they are lacking in most of the qualities he hoped to find in them. But has he given them every possible opportunity? He has denied them opportunity such as a rough road affords for the development of strength of character.

No doubt the way of life can be made too rough. Recent studies of talented children appear to disprove the theory that great abilities thrive on poverty, insecurity, and unhappiness.[3] It is not essential to the development of strength of character that children should be exposed to the strain of air raids or be condemned to the starvation of a food blockade. It is not essential to their highest good that they should be brought into the world

[3] See *Readers' Digest,* April, 1941, p. 29.

with inherited diseases; or that they should grow up in the physical and social conditions of a "blighted" community; or that they should be exploited for monetary gain; or that they should be indoctrinated with the ideas of militarism, chauvinism, and imperialism; or that they should be led by precept and example into a cynical view of the world and life. It is quite clear, however, that a world that is to serve as a school of moral and spiritual life must contain some measure of hardship and hazard. As Harris Franklin Rall has said:

> For all creative work there must be a material, or medium, and such a medium will necessarily be at once plastic and resistant, that which lends itself to the purpose of creativity and yet resists its efforts. . . . . The paradox of this resistance and support is merely on the surface; only that which offers resistance can yield the needed support. The atmosphere which resists the airplane supports it in its flight. The friction that impedes the railway train enables the locomotive wheels to grip the rails instead of whirling helplessly around. . . . . Opportunity and resistance are thus the converse of each other. And usually each varies directly with the other. Marble has more "character" than soft clay and offers more resistance; clay will do for the model, the masterpiece of the sculptor calls for marble.[4]

[4] *Christianity: An Inquiry into Its Nature and Truth,* pp. 331-32. Used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

III

Why, then, are we bidden to pray, "Lead us not into temptation"? If it is essential to our moral and spiritual development that we should be placed in situations that subject us to temptation, why should we pray not to be led into them? There are times when man's life refuses to be confined within the bounds of his logic. It makes statements that appear to be mutually contradictory and are nonetheless true. It says, "You need to be led into temptation"; and it says, "You need to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.'" Both of these statements are true. We undoubtedly need to be placed in situations that subject us to temptation; yet it would be absurd for us to pray to be led into them, and it is wise for us to pray not to be led into them. There is hope for a man who, knowing his weakness, prays, "Our Father, who art in heaven, ... Lead us not into temptation." How much hope is there for one who says, "Lead on! I am equal to anything"? It is significant that Jesus, facing the possibility of crucifixion, prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me."

They who have had experience of loss and pain

may well pray, "Lead us not into trial." They who have had experience of shame and remorse may well pray, "Lead us not into temptation." They who, being very young, are still inexperienced may well pray, "Lead us not into situations that will put us to the test." He who tries to run away from trouble when it comes is a coward; he who "asks for" trouble is a fool. With the help of God a man may be strong enough to resist temptation when it comes; but no man is strong enough to invite it.

We may be quite sure that God will never subject us to any temptation that is beyond our power to resist or lay upon us any burden that is too heavy for us to bear. It is not God who publishes or distributes pornographic magazines. It is not God who underpays saleswomen or bank clerks. It is not God who produces the physical and social conditions of mill towns, mining towns, and metropolitan slums. It is not God who produces political or economic conditions that make for war. It is not God who kills or mutilates or starves helpless aged persons and women and children. We may be quite sure that God will never place us in an "impossible" situation. We cannot be sure, however, that we shall never find ourselves in a situa-

tion that is too difficult for us. We may become the victims of other people's greed and folly, as they also may become the victims of ours. We may well pray not to be led into social conditions that make for every kind of disaster—and examine our own hearts and practices as we pray. It is futile to pray for deliverance from an outrageous situation if we have no perception of our own responsibility for the conditions that have led to it, or if we are impenitent and morally complacent. In the situation that now obtains in the world, prayer for deliverance from utter disaster will avail only if it comes from a broken and a contrite heart that earnestly desires to know and do the will of God.

IV

In Gethsemane Jesus prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done." [5] We are bidden to pray, "Our Father, lead us not into temptation, but (if we must go into situations that will try our souls) deliver us from evil." This is not a prayer for deliverance from calamity. It is a prayer for deliverance from sin and from despair. It does not say: Deliver

[5] Matthew 26:42.

us from poverty and insecurity, and from the malice and cruelty of men. It says: If it be possible, let this cup pass away from us; but if it cannot pass away except we drink it, deliver us from evil, suffer us not to give way to panic and cowardice or to bitterness or to despair.

In any situation God can deliver us from evil if we fix our attention, and keep it fixed, on him. Years ago Henry Churchill King, who was then president of Oberlin College, wrote a little book which obtained a wide circulation among the college students of my generation. It was entitled *A Rational Fight for Character,* and its contention was that a man can overcome temptation, any temptation, if he will keep his attention fixed upon "those higher considerations which ought to prevail." But this, of course, is only a statement of the human problem, not a solution. The trouble is that a man can so easily lose sight of those higher considerations which ought to prevail.

There is something other than the flesh—his own body—that makes demands on a man. There is something other than material comfort for which a man ought to live. There is something more important than social prestige, which, in fact, is often a very little thing—the momentary

elevation of a man who, although actually petty, is thought to be important by people who themselves live by standards which God and history have condemned. There *are* higher considerations which ought to prevail, but we can easily lose sight of them. That a man should be decent, clean, honorable, trustworthy; that he should never, under any circumstances, let other people down—do we know this? Of course we do, when we stop to think. The trouble is that we may not stop to think until we have sinned and suffered and seen other people suffer in consequence of our sins. That God lives and reigns; that he is Christlike in character; that he is persistently at work in history, making for good; that to know life's meaning, its joy and glory, is to work with him, and not against him—do we believe this? Some of us do, when we see things as they are. But we can fail to see things as they are. We can get a pitifully distorted view of the world and life. In any situation God can deliver us from evil, *provided that we keep our attention fixed on him.*

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY

THE Lord's Prayer as it is now offered throughout the world closes with the words, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." Did the prayer which Jesus gave to his disciples contain these words? They do not appear in the Gospel According to Luke, or in the earliest and best manuscripts of Matthew. Almost certainly they were not spoken by Jesus. But who would be willing to omit them as he now offers the Lord's Prayer? We pray that the name of God may be hallowed in a world where the true nature of God is still largely unrecognized. We pray that the kingdom of God may come in a world that appears to be ruled by pride, greed, cunning, and military force. We pray that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven, realizing that the present odds against its being done are terrific. We pray for daily

bread in a world where millions of human beings go hungry, although there is bread enough and to spare. We pray for the forgiveness of sins, and are abashed by the thoughts of our minds and the desires of our hearts. We pray for deliverance from evil at a moment in history when demonic forces are sweeping over the earth. We need to remind ourselves that God lives and reigns. We need to cry out, "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

I

It is a fact that God reigns. Ten years ago, in a sermon preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, the Archbishop of York said:

> While we deliberate, He reigns.
> When we decide wisely, He reigns.
> When we decide foolishly, He reigns.
> When we serve Him humbly, loyally, He reigns.
> When we serve Him self-assertively, He reigns.
> When we rebel and seek to withhold our service, He reigns.

This, undoubtedly, is the truth. At a given moment in history it may seem to be true that the rulership of the world is not in the hands of God but in the hands of selfish and stiff-necked men. Caesar sits securely on his throne; Christ perishes

on a cross. So it appears. But it is not so.

In Heywood Broun's fanciful autobiography of Pontius Pilate that ill-starred official is made to say that his choice lay between Rome and the kingdom of heaven, and that he could do no other than he did, seeing that Rome was reality and the kingdom of heaven was only a dream. He also is made to say that when he looked into the face of Christ he was carried up to a high place whence he could see the kingdoms of the world, and Rome was not one of them. This, to be sure, is Heywood Broun speaking, long after the event; but it is undeniably the judgment of history. Obliged to choose between reality and a dream world, Pilate made a mistake. He mistook the one for the other. He rejected reality in favor of a fool's paradise that was destined to become "a vast and empty mass of tumbling ruins among which dwelt in misery the merest handful of despairing men."

It was easy for Pilate to make this mistake. How very impressive an empire that covered the whole of Europe and reached into Africa and Asia! How very substantial-looking those palaces and basilicas, those arches and amphitheaters, those roads and aqueducts and suburban villas which contributed to the grandeur of the city men

called eternal! How very great and far-reaching the power of Caesar! It was easy for Pilate to think Rome was reality. It is always easy to mistake appearance for reality. Wealth and luxury look substantial, even when they are enjoyed at the cost of terrible poverty to others. Empire is undeniably impressive, even when it means that native populations in conquered territories remain poor, diseased, and illiterate. Caesar appears to have power, even when the inexorable laws of life are operating to dethrone him. Nevertheless, it is God, and not Caesar, who reigns. It is the kingdom of God, and not any earthly empire, that endures. In the New Testament it is said of Christ that he is the stone which the builders rejected but which God has made the cornerstone of the world.[1] It is also said, "He that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces"; and it appears to be so. On that stone the Roman Empire fell, and was broken to pieces. On that stone feudalism fell, and was shattered. On that stone fell the France of Louis XVI and the Russia of Nicholas II, and they likewise were broken to pieces. On that stone a civilization organized on the basis of individual and national self-interest is now falling,

[1] Mark 12:10; Matthew 21:42; Luke 20:17; I Peter 2:7.

and being shattered. The structure of reality is such that human society cannot permanently organize itself on any principle that is a defiance of the righteousness of God revealed in Christ.

In the Revelation of John a trumpet sounds and loud voices from heaven declare: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." [2] This saying may be regarded as a prophecy of future triumph. It may also be received as a declaration of present fact. It is a fact that the rulership of the world is in the hands of God. "Thine is the kingdom."

II

Whose is the power? Today men differ in their view of war. There are those who believe that war only adds to the evil it seeks to subdue. There are many who believe that war can at least remove the obstacle of outrageous evil and open the way to good. There are some, too old to fight, who think that fighting is glorious. But there is now among men a growing recognition of the fact that war is inherently destructive, and not in any way creative. After irreplacable historic structures

[2] Revelation 11:15.

have been reduced to rubble; after hundreds of churches have been demolished; after innumerable industrial plants and apartment houses have been utterly destroyed; after millions of human beings, including children, have been subjected to unreportable terror and suffering; after a multitude such as no man could number have been killed outright or have perished from hunger and disease; then, when the war is over, all things whatsoever that make for justice and peace remain to be done; and the fear and hate and group egoism which the war has fostered make the doing of such things extremely difficult, if not impossible. A bombing plane has power to destroy. It has no power to build or to redeem.

But consider the power of God. That can do something positive and redemptive. It can open men's eyes. It can bring them to repentance. It can deliver them from pride and arrogance and greed and selfishness and lust for dominion. It can develop in them a sense of decency which cannot stomach the brutal killing of noncombatants. It can beget in them the conviction that scientific warfare is a disgrace to human nature. It can prompt them to do such works of mercy as the American Friends Service Committee and many

Christian missionaries are now engaged in. It can lead them to explore the bases of a just and durable peace. It can bring them to a point where they are willing and glad to make any personal sacrifice that may be necessary to the achievement of peace on earth, good will among men. The power of armies, navies, and bombing planes is hardly to be compared to the power of God, who secures the eventual frustration of human purposes that are selfish and the eventual fulfillment of those that are based on love. "Thine is the power."

III

Whose is the glory? We humans are not to be condemned for our love of glory. We are so made that we cannot help hungering and thirsting after glory. We are not as the beasts of the field, which have only physical appetites to satisfy. We are as the sons of God, who cannot live on bread alone. The trouble with us is that we do not recognize glory when we see it. What we commonly take to be glory is not glory but only glitter. We spend our lives in hectic pursuit of money and prestige. We are fascinated by pomp and circumstance. Some of us, in hope of retaining expensive lux-

uries and social position, are prepared to sacrifice our sons!

Today we Americans are being urged to form with the English-speaking peoples of the world a naval and economic alliance that will be able to dominate the world and to give to the world of the future "that order under law which Rome gave to the ancient world and Britain to the world that is now passing away." [3] It has been said to us:

The vision of America as the principal guarantor of the freedom of the seas, the vision of America as the dynamic leader of world trade, has within it the possibilities of such enormous human progress as to stagger the imagination. Let us not be staggered by it. Let us rise to its tremendous possibilities. Our thinking of world trade today is on ridiculously small terms. For example, we think of Asia as being worth only a few hundred millions a year to us. Actually, in the decades to come Asia will be worth to us exactly zero—or else it will be worth to us four, five, ten billions of dollars a year. And the latter are the terms we must think in, or else confess a pitiful impotence.[4]

We have been told:

Our government has committed the American community to participation in this war as the economic ally of England, and as her spiritual, if not her political, partner

[3] Walter Lippmann, in an editorial in *Life,* April 7, 1941.
[4] Henry R. Luce, in an editorial in *Life,* February 17, 1941.

in her struggle with the enemies of the British Empire everywhere in the world, to help prevent, if possible, their destruction of the Empire, and if this should not be possible, to take her place as the heir and residuary legatee or receiver for whatever economic and political assets of the Empire survive her defeat. . . . .

Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked upon a career of imperialism, both in world affairs and in every other aspect of her life, with all the opportunities, responsibilities, and perils which that implies. . . . . At best, England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism, in which the economic resources and the military and naval strength of the United States will be the center of gravity. Southward in our hemisphere and westward in the Pacific the path of empire takes its way, and in modern terms of economic power as well as political prestige, the scepter passes to the United States.[5]

Today we Americans are being shown the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and are being told that all these things will be ours if we have the courage to fulfill our manifest destiny and become the greatest imperial power on earth. May grace be given us to see that the path of that kind of glory leads but to the grave. We shall indeed be fools and blind if we do not lift our

[5] Virgil Jordan, president of the National Industrial Conference Board, in an address before the Investment Bankers Association of America on December 10, 1940; reported in *Propaganda Analysis*, March 27, 1941, p. 7.

minds to God and say, "Thine is the glory." Glory of private possession of great wealth—and millions of people on relief; glory of army, air force, and fleet—and the bloody remains of a little child clutching a shattered doll; glory of imperial pomp and power—and a world in the convulsions of total war: we have surely had enough of this kind of glory. What we now need is the glory of God. Glory of physicians and nurses healing the sick; glory of men of compassion and good will feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, bringing hope to the despairing; glory of scientists and teachers enabling them that walk in darkness to see a great light; glory of businessmen, industrialists, and bankers undertaking to secure for the whole community a higher standard of living; glory of statesmen seeking to organize the world on the basis of justice and opportunity for all; glory of priests and prophets faithfully performing their task; glory of the multitude of men reaching for the stars; glory of the human spirit in communion with the Eternal; glory such as appeared in the face of Jesus Christ—this is the glory we need.

The kingdom of God is for ever. The power of God, which has brought us into being and is able

to deliver us from evil, is able to deliver us from mortality and bring us to everlasting life. The glory of God, which is love, will be made forever manifest in an enduring community of men and women who, through Christ, have been given the victory over sin and death. "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." To which, in faith and hope and personal commitment, let all the people say, "Amen!"

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